

Claims

1. A surgical sling assembly for implanting in tissue to provide anatomical support in a patient, comprising:
 - a sling; and
 - a biocompatible casing enclosing at least a portion of the sling, the biocompatible casing comprising a bioabsorbable material, wherein the biocompatible casing is absorbed by the patient's tissues after the surgical sling assembly is positioned within the patient's tissue to provide anatomical support.
2. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the biocompatible casing comprises a sleeve.
3. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the biocompatible casing comprises a coating.
4. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the bioabsorbable material comprises an alginate.
5. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the bioabsorbable material comprises a sugar based formulation.
6. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the bioabsorbable material comprises a starch.
7. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the bioabsorbable material comprises a gelatin.
8. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the bioabsorbable material comprises cellulose.
9. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the bioabsorbable material comprises polyvinyl alcohol.
10. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the bioabsorbable material comprises polyglycolic acid.
11. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the bioabsorbable material comprises polylactic acid.
12. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the bioabsorbable material comprises polydioxinone.
13. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the bioabsorbable material comprises a lubricious material.
14. The sling assembly of claim 1, wherein the surgical sling assembly is positioned within a patient's periurethral tissues to treat urinary incontinence.

15. The sling assembly of claim 14, wherein the biocompatible casing is absorbed by the patient's tissues in less than ten minutes after the surgical sling assembly is positioned within the patient's periurethral tissues.

16. The sling assembly of claim 15, wherein the biocompatible casing is absorbed by the patient's tissues in eight to ten minutes after the surgical sling assembly is positioned within the patient's periurethral tissues.

17. A method for providing anatomical support in a patient, comprising:

providing a surgical sling assembly, comprising:

a sling; and

a biocompatible casing enclosing at least a portion of the sling, the biocompatible casing comprising a bioabsorbable material, wherein the biocompatible casing is absorbed by the patient's tissues after the surgical sling assembly is positioned within the patient's tissue to provide anatomical support; and

positioning the sling within the patient's tissue.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein positioning the sling comprises positioning the sling within a patient's periurethral tissues to treat urinary incontinence.